



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

INEZ MOORE TENENBAUM
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

July 25, 2003

TO: District Superintendents

FROM: Donald N. Tudor, Director
Office of Transportation

SUBJECT: Licensing Requirements for Operating School District Activity Bus

Over the past several months, a number of school district transportation officials have contacted the State Department of Education (SDE) and asked for clarification on the licensing requirements for individuals operating a district-owned activity bus. The question was submitted to the SDE's Office of General Counsel for review, and a request for an advisory opinion was made.

After researching the pertinent state and federal statutes, the SDE's Office of General Counsel's staff has determined that an individual operating a school district vehicle identified on the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards Certification Plate inside the vehicle as meeting the federal school bus standards must meet all of the licensing requirements necessary to operate a state-owned school bus. Currently, an individual operating a state-owned school bus is required to have a Commercial Drivers License (CDL) with a "P" passenger endorsement and an "S" school bus endorsement or a "T" school bus restriction.

If your school district has individuals driving your activity buses that do not meet the aforementioned licensing requirements, I urge you to develop and implement a plan for taking corrective action as soon as possible. Please keep in mind that the federal government has mandated that all states must establish statutes requiring a CDL with a "School Bus" endorsement by September 30, 2005, to operate a school bus or risk losing federal highway funds.

The intent of the opinion is to provide you with information essential for the safe operation of your activity bus fleet. If you have any questions, please contact Doug Hamrick at 803-734-8246.

DNT/bc

cc: District Transportation Supervisors
Area and County Supervisors